

Docket No.: NHL-HOL-63
Serial No.: 10/723,451
Customer No.: 00432

Claim Amendments

1-11 (canceled)

12. (original) A container filling plant conveyer arrangement configured to transport containers, such as bottles and cans, said conveyer arrangement comprising:

an input being configured and disposed to receive an input stream of containers;

a first output being configured and disposed to discharge a first output stream of containers;

a second output being configured and disposed to discharge a second output stream of containers;

a first conveyer structure and a second conveyer structure;

said first conveyer structure being configured and disposed to receive a portion of the input stream of containers from said input and being configured and disposed to discharge the first output stream of containers to said first output;

said second conveyer structure being configured and disposed to receive a portion of the input stream of containers from said input and being configured and disposed to discharge the second output stream of containers to said second output;

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said first conveyer structure and said second conveyer structure together being configured and disposed in a physical relation with respect to one another to separate the input stream of containers into the first output stream of containers and into the second output stream of containers; and

a guide structure being configured and disposed to guide the first output stream of containers to said first output and the second output stream of containers to said second output.

13. (original) The container filling plant conveyer arrangement according to claim 12, wherein:

said first conveyor structure comprises a first portion disposed adjacent said input configured to receive an input stream of containers and a second portion disposed adjacent said first output being configured to discharge a first output stream of containers;

said second conveyer structure comprises a first portion disposed adjacent said input configured to receive an input stream of containers and a second portion disposed adjacent said second output being configured to discharge a second output stream of containers;

said second portion of said first conveyer structure and said

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second portion of said second conveyer structure being disposed to diverge from one another at a point of divergence;

said guide structure is disposed between said point of divergence and said first and second outputs to permit separation of the first stream of containers into the first output stream of containers and into the second output stream of containers.

14. (original) The container filling plant conveyer arrangement according to claim 13, wherein:

said guide structure comprises a tip portion;

said second portion of said first conveyer structure and said second portion of said second conveyer structure are disposed at an angle with respect to one another to separate the first output stream of containers from the second output stream of containers; and

said second portion of said first conveyer structure and said second portion of said second conveyer structure diverge from one another anteriorly of said tip portion of said guide structure.

15. (currently amended) The container filling plant conveyer arrangement according to claim 14, comprising:

at least one sheet metal ~~slide~~ surface structure;

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said at least one sheet metal ~~slide~~ surface structure is disposed adjacent said point of divergence to permit separation of the first output stream of containers and the second output stream of containers; and

said at least one sheet metal ~~slide~~ surface structure is configured to cover at least a portion of the space between said first conveyer structure and said second conveyer structure and to permit sliding of containers thereon.

16. (original) The container filling plant conveyer arrangement according to claim 15, wherein:

said first conveyer structure comprises a first band conveyer;
and

said second conveyer structure comprises a second band conveyer;

and the container filling plant conveyer arrangement further comprising:

a turn station configured and disposed to effectuate at least one of (i) and (ii), wherein (i) and (ii) comprise:

(i) turning of a conveyer band of a band conveyer; and

(ii) turning of the direction of movement of containers on a

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band conveyer.

17. (original) The container filling plant conveyer arrangement according to claim 16, comprising:

a third conveyer structure and a fourth conveyer structure together being configured and disposed to receive containers from said first output and to separate containers from said first output into a third output stream of containers and a fourth output stream of containers.

18. (original) The container filling plant conveyer arrangement according to claim 16, comprising:

a third conveyer structure and a fourth conveyer structure together being configured and disposed to receive containers from said first output and to separate containers from said first output into a third output stream of containers and a fourth output stream of containers.

19. (original) The container filling plant conveyer arrangement according to claim 18, wherein:

said angle comprises approximately 1.5 degrees.

20. (currently amended) The container filling plant conveyer arrangement according to claim 12, comprising at least one of (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), and (g), wherein (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), and (g) comprise:

(a) said first conveyer structure comprises a first portion disposed adjacent said input configured to receive an input stream of containers and a second portion disposed adjacent said first output being configured to discharge a first output stream of containers;

said second conveyer structure comprises a first portion disposed adjacent said input configured to receive an input stream of containers and a second portion disposed adjacent said second output being configured to discharge a second output stream of containers;

said second portion of said first conveyer structure and said second portion of said second conveyer structure being disposed to diverge from one another at a point of divergence;

said guide structure is disposed between said point of divergence and said first and second outputs to permit separation of the first stream of containers into the first output stream of containers and into the second output stream of containers;

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(b) said guide structure comprises a tip portion;

said second portion of said first conveyer structure and said second portion of said second conveyer structure are disposed at an angle with respect to one another to separate the first output stream of containers from the second output stream of containers; and

said second portion of said first conveyer structure and said second portion of said second conveyer structure diverge from one another anteriorly of said tip portion of said guide structure;

(c) at least one sheet metal ~~slide~~ surface structure;

said at least one sheet metal ~~slide~~ surface structure is disposed adjacent said point of divergence to permit separation of the first output stream of containers and the second output stream of containers; and

said at least one sheet metal ~~slide~~ surface structure is configured to cover at least a portion of the space between said first conveyer structure and said second conveyer structure and to permit sliding of containers thereon;

(d) said first conveyer structure comprises a first band conveyer; and

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said second conveyer structure comprises a second band conveyer;

and the container filling plant conveyer arrangement further comprising:

a turn station configured and disposed to effectuate at least one of (i) and (ii), wherein (i) and (ii) comprise:

(i) turning of a conveyer band of a band conveyer; and

(ii) turning of the direction of movement of containers on a band conveyer;

(e) a third conveyer structure and a fourth conveyer structure together being configured and disposed to receive containers from said first output and to separate containers from said first output into a third output stream of containers and a fourth output stream of containers;

(f) said first conveyer structure and said second conveyer structure comprise one of (i) and (ii), wherein (i) and (ii) comprise:

(i) a belt conveyer structure; and

(ii) a chain conveyer structure;

and

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(g) said second portion of said first conveyer structure and said second portion of said second conveyer structure are disposed at an angle with respect to one another to separate the first output stream of containers from the second output stream of containers;

said angle comprises approximately 1.5 degrees.

21. (new) A container filling plant conveyor arrangement being configured and disposed to separate and divide streams of containers, said conveyor arrangement comprising:

at least one container input end being configured and disposed to transport a stream of containers;

at least two bands being configured and disposed to transport a stream of containers;

each of said at least two bands having an input and an output;

said at least two bands being disposed side by side and forming a point of divergence between said inputs and said outputs;

at least one sheet metal surface structure being disposed adjacent said point of divergence and being configured to cover a space formed by the divergence of said at least two bands downstream of said point of divergence and being configured to permit separation of an input stream of containers into a first output

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stream of containers and a second output stream of containers and to permit sliding of containers thereon;

at least one guide structure being disposed downstream of said point of divergence; and

said at least one guide structure being configured and disposed to permit separation of an input stream of containers into a first output stream of containers and a second output stream of containers.

22. (new) The container filling plant conveyor arrangement according to Claim 21, wherein said sheet metal surface structure is configured to cover a substantial portion of the space formed by the divergence of said at least two bands downstream of said point of divergence.

23. (new) The container filling plant conveyor arrangement according to Claim 22, wherein said sheet metal surface structure is configured to cover substantially all of the space formed by the divergence of said at least two bands downstream of said point of divergence.

24. (new) The container filling plant conveyer arrangement according to claim 21, wherein:

each of said at least two bands comprise a first portion disposed adjacent said input end and being configured to receive an input stream of containers, and a second portion being configured to discharge a first output stream of containers and a second output stream of containers; and

said at least one guide structure being disposed between said point of divergence and said first and second outputs to permit separation of the first stream of containers into a first output stream of containers and into a second output stream of containers to permit separation.

25. (new) The container filling plant conveyer arrangement according to claim 24, wherein:

said at least one guide structure comprises a tip portion;

said second portions of said at least two bands being disposed at an angle with respect to one another to separate containers into a first output stream of containers and a second output stream of containers; and

said second portions of said at least two bands diverging from

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one another upstream of said tip portion of said at least one guide structure.

26. (new) The container filling plant conveyer arrangement according to claim 25, comprising:

said at least one sheet metal surface structure being disposed adjacent said point of divergence to permit separation of containers into a first output stream of containers and a second output stream of containers; and

said at least one sheet metal surface structure being configured to cover at least a portion of the space between said at least two bands to permit sliding of containers thereon.

27. (new) The container filling plant conveyer arrangement according to claim 26, wherein:

said at least two bands comprise a first band conveyor and a second band conveyor; and

the container filling plant conveyer arrangement further comprising:

a turn station configured and disposed to effectuate at least one of (i) and (ii), wherein (i) and (ii) comprise:

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- (i) turning of a conveyer band of a band conveyer; and
- (ii) turning of the direction of movement of containers on a band conveyer.

28. (new) The container filling plant conveyer arrangement according to claim 27, comprising:

a third conveyer structure and a fourth conveyer structure together being configured and disposed to receive containers from a first output stream of containers and to separate containers from a first output stream of containers into a third output stream of containers and a fourth output stream of containers.

29. (new) The container filling plant conveyer arrangement according to claim 28, wherein:

said at least two bands comprise one of (i) and (ii), wherein (i) and (ii) comprise:

- (i) a belt conveyer structure; and
- (ii) a chain conveyer structure.

30. (new) The container filling plant conveyer arrangement according to claim 29, wherein:

said angle comprises approximately 1.5 degrees.

31. (new) The container filling plant conveyer arrangement according to claim 30, comprising at least one of (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h) and (i), wherein (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), and (i) comprise:

(a) said sheet metal surface structure is configured to cover a substantial portion of the space formed by the divergence of said at least two bands downstream of said point of divergence;

(b) said sheet metal surface structure is configured to cover substantially all of the space formed by the divergence of said at least two bands downstream of said point of divergence;

(c) each of said at least two bands comprise a first portion disposed adjacent said input end and being configured to receive an input stream of containers, and a second portion being configured to discharge a first output stream of containers and a second output stream of containers; and

said at least one guide structure being disposed between said point of divergence and said first and second outputs to permit

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separation of the first stream of containers into a first output stream of containers and into a second output stream of containers to permit separation;

(d) said at least one guide structure comprises a tip portion;

said second portions of said at least two bands being disposed at an angle with respect to one another to separate containers into a first output stream of containers and a second output stream of containers; and

said second portions of said at least two bands diverging from one another upstream of said tip portion of said at least one guide structure.

(e) said at least one sheet metal surface structure being disposed adjacent said point of divergence to permit separation of containers into a first stream of containers and a second output stream of containers; and

said at least one sheet metal surface structure being configured to cover at least a portion of the space between said at least two bands to permit sliding of containers thereon.

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(f) said at least two bands comprise a first band conveyor and a second band conveyor; and

the container filling plant conveyor arrangement further comprising:

a turn station configured and disposed to effectuate at least one of (i) and (ii), wherein (i) and (ii) comprise:

(i) turning of a conveyor band of a band conveyor; and

(ii) turning of the direction of movement of containers on a band conveyor.

(g) a third conveyor structure and a fourth conveyor structure together being configured and disposed to receive containers from a first output stream of containers and to separate containers from a first output stream of containers into a third output stream of containers and a fourth output stream of containers.

(h) said at least two bands comprise one of (i) and (ii), wherein (i) and (ii) comprise:

(i) a belt conveyor structure; and

(ii) a chain conveyor structure. and

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(i) said angle comprises approximately 1.5 degrees.